

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUCHAREST 3251

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OTRA
SUBJ: RABBI MILLER'S TRIP TO ROMANIA

REF: (A) STATE 162929 (B) BUCH 3055

1. IN ABSENCE OF AMBASSADOR COHEN I TALKED TODAY TO ISRAELI CHARGE AVGAR. BETWEEN JULY 1 AND JULY 15, 150 PERSONS HAD DEPARTED FOR ISRAEL. IN THE SAME PERIOD THE ISRAELI EMBASSY HAS ISSUED 207 VISAS, AND HAS BEEN INFORMED BY ROMANIAN AUTHROITIES THAT 337 PERSONS HAD BEEN APPROVED FOR EMIGRATION TO ISRAEL. AVGAR, ALLUDING TO THE GAPS BETWEEN APPROVAL, VISA ISSUANCE AND DEPARTURE, SAID HE SIMPLY COULD NOT MAKE A GUESS AS TO TOTAL JULY DEPARTURES, EXCEPT TO NOTE THAT OF ANY GIVEN NUMBER LEAVING FOR ISRAEL 8-9 PERCENT CHANGE DESTINATION BEFORE REACHING ISRAEL. (INCIDENTALLY TO COMPOUND EARLIER CONFUSION AVGAR USED 197 AS JUNE DEPARTURE FIGURE, WHEREAS AMBASSADOR COHEN HAD USED 303 AND FOREIGN MINISTER ALLON SAYS 199) (REFTEL B). (VISAS ISSUED FOR JUNE WERE 153). EVEN ALLOWING FOR GAPS MENTIONED WORTH NOTING THAT APPROVALS FOR JUNE AND JULY NEARLY 1000) SHOULD PROBABLY ASSURE A DEPARTURE RATE OF ABOUT 300 PER MONTH AVERAGE FOR MOST OF REMAINDER OF THIS YEAR.

2. RABBI ROSEN CAME TO CALL ON ME YESTERDAY TO DISCUSS HIS EXPERIENCES IN GENEVA. ON THE ONE HAND HE IS PLEASED TO HAVE WON THE ENDORSEMENT OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS FOR HIS
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LEADERSHIP OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN ROMANIA (TEXT REPEATED

SEPTTEL). ON THE OTHER HE WAS DISTRESSED THAT HE ACHIEVED THIS ONLY AFTER THE THREAT OF A PUBLIC DECLARATION DESIGNED TO OVERCOME THE EFFECT OF WHAT HE CONSIDERED ISRAELI INSPIRED DEFAMATORY PRESS ATTACKS.

(I.E. THAT HE WAS OPERATING ESSENTIALLY AS A ROMANIAN GOVERNMENT AGENT AND NOT ON BEHALF OF THE ROMANIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY). HE FOUND RABBI MILLER GENERALLY UNHELPFUL AND CONTINUES TO RESENT RABBI MILLER'S IGNORING HIM IN HIS DEALINGS ON A PROBLEM OF VITAL CONCERN TO HIM. AT THIS STAGE, HE IS NO LONGER EAGER FOR RABBI MILLER TO COME TO ROMANIA SINCE HE BELIEVES RABBI MILLER WILL DO LITTLE MORE THAN SAY HE (MILLER) HOPES THE SITUATION WILL CONTINUE TO GET BETTER. HE ALSO FEELS IF MILLER DOES COME, OUT OF COURTESY IF NOTHING ELSE, HE OUGHT TO COME AT THE INVITATION OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY NOT THAT OF THE ROMANIAN GOVERNMENT. HE HIMSELF (ROSEN) DOES NOT PLAN TO GO TO THE US HIMSELF UNTIL NOVEMBER WHEN HE HAS SOME SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS AND WOULD BE QUITE CONTENT TO TALK TO JEWISH ORGANIZATION LEADERS THEN AND TO RECEIVE MILP R'S LIKELY SUCCESSOR, RABBI SCHINDLER HERE EARLY NEXT YEAR.

3. WITH REGARD TO ISRAELI ATTITUDES, RABBI ROSEN SAID HE WAS UNPREPARED FOR THE PRESS ATTACKS AND ALSO FOR THE HARD LINE TAKEN BY SAPIR AT GENEVA. AFTER HIS COUNTER-ATTACKS HE SAYS THIS ISRAELI SEGMENT OF THE CONGRESS QUIETED DOWN AND HE WAS TOLD BY BOTH DULCIN (VICE PRESIDENT OF THE JEWISH AGENCY) AND PHILIP KLUTZNICK THAT ALLON WOULD RAISE THE WHOLE QUESTION AT THIS WEEK'S CABINET MEETING AND WOULD GET WORD TO RABBI MILLER TO BE HELPFUL ON THE TRADE AGREEMENT.

4. SO FAR AS THE SURVEY OF WOULD BE EMIGRANTS IS CONCERNED, RABBI ROSEN SAYS IT IS CONTINUING AND AT THE MOMENT HAS REGISTERED ABOUT 500 INDIVIDUALS IN BUCHAREST AND 300 IN THE PROVINCES. HIS OWN GUESS ON DEPARTURES FOR ISRAEL IN JULY REMAINS ABOUT 300. HE SAYS THE HOUSING SETTLEMENT QUESTION IS STILL HOLDING SOME PEOPLE UP AND HE IS MAKING ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO GET THAT ASPECT SOLVED.

5. IN MY DISCUSSION JULY 11 WITH FOREIGN MINISTER MACOVESCU, CONFIDENTIAL

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HE TOUCHED ON THE EMIGRATION QUESTION ONLY TO THE EXTENT OF NOTING THAT THINGS WERE MOVING BETTER AND SAID HE EXPECTED DEPARTURES IN JULY TO BE AROUND 300.

6. COMMENT: IN LIGHT OF THE HOUSE AND SENATE COMMITTEES VOTES AND ACTUAL DEPARTURES, I MYSELF FEEL LESS STRONGLY ABOUT THE NEED FOR A VISIT BY RABBI MILLER THAN I DID WHEN I WAS IN WASHINGTON LAST MONTH. IN FACT, I SENSE FROM BOTH REFTTEL A AND MY OWN TALKS

WITH RABBI ROSEN THAT THE MUTUAL RESENTMENTS BETWEEN THE TWO RABBIS
COULD PROVIDE LESS THAN A HAPPY OUTCOME. AT THE SAME TIME, I
REMAIN CONVINCED THAT STEPS NEED TO BE TAKEN TO TRY TO BRIDGE
THE STATISTICAL AND ASSUMPTION GAPS (AS THE ISRAELI CHARGE SAID
TODAY "NOBODY" KNOWS HOW MANY JEW THERE ARE STILL IN ROMANIA).
RABBI MILLER HAD TOLD ME ON THE PHONE HE DID NOT WANT A
CONFRONTATION WITH ROMANIA BUT WANTED TO SEE A CLEAR UPTURN
IN DEPARTURES. THIS IS NOW TAKING PLACE. IT MAY THEREFORE
BE MORE USEFUL FOR HIM OR RABBI SCHINDLER TO COME LATER
IN THE YEAR AS A SIGN OF CONTINUING INTEREST IN THE EMIGRATION
QUESTION. AS I HAVE ALREADY RECOMMENDED, I BELIEVE THE ADMINISTRA-
TION OUGHT TO URGE CONGRESSIONAL ACTION BEFORE THE AUGUST RECESS.
IF SUCH ACTION IS IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT RABBI MILLER'S HAVING BEEN
TO BUCHAREST, THEN HE SHOULD BE URGED TO COME. IF HIS VISIT IS NOT
A PREREQUISITE THEN I FEEL THE DECISION IS BEST LEFT TO HIM.
BARNES

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